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UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 001899

SIPDIS

SAN JOSE FOR BLINK

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [HO](#) [NOAA](#) [UNEP](#) [AID](#)

SUBJECT: NOAA, UNEP PROPOSED COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN
MEETS LUKEWARM GOH RECEPTION

1. Summary: On August 1, NOAA representative Gonzalo Cid met with officials of the Honduran Institute of Tourism (IHT) and the Ministry of the Environment (SERNA) to discuss the creation of a National Program of Action (NPA) to implement the Global Program of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA). The proposed NPA would serve as a strategic planning tool in the development of an integrated coastal management policy to engage government, communities, and industry in the protection and preservation of marine resources. NOAA's goal at the meeting, Cid said, was to determine the level of GOH interest in the program and to identify appropriate governmental contacts and agencies. Representatives from USAID present at the meetings expressed concern that the project not duplicate the efforts of USAID's MIRA watershed management program. End summary.

2. National Programs of Action were a key outcome of the 2004 White Water to Blue Water Initiative. NOAA and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) are encouraging governments in the Wider Caribbean region to develop NPAs to serve as integrated management and policy frameworks for the protection and preservation of the marine ecosystem. Following GOH Minister of the Environment Patricia Panting's expression of interest in developing an NPA at the White Water to Blue Water conference in 2004, NOAA representative Gonzalo Cid came to Honduras to assess the degree of interest at the working level. In meetings with GOH Minister of Tourism Thierry Pierrefeu and Vice Minister for the Environment Gerardo Salgado, Cid described the proposed NPA as a strategic tool for an integrated plan of sustainable development, conservation, and the protection of marine resources. The NPA would provide a framework for identifying environmental threats and directing responses from the public and private sectors. Cid stressed that, as a policy mechanism, the NPA would provide donors with an added sense of security by prioritizing sustainable development goals and organizing the flow of support.

3. Both Pierrefeu and Salgado responded to the proposal with cautious acceptance. Pierrefeu's concerns centered around the need for stronger coordination of tourism interests with environmental policy; Salgado questioned the necessity for another environmental management program, citing the potential overlap with other projects such as USAID's integrated watershed resources management program MIRA. The Minister and Vice Minister also expressed concerns with the overall coordination of the NPA project, citing the complexity of managing the environmental, agricultural, energy, and tourism interests that would be involved in coastal management. Cid responded that the NPA's policy framework would add value by integrating and coordinating existing programs, rather than duplicating them, and explained that an overarching policy would simplify rather than complicate interactions between the various sectors. Ultimately the GOH officials agreed to go ahead with the project, designating SERNA as the point of contact.

4. Outside of the meetings, Cid said that the response from the GOH was what he expected at this early stage in the program, but that he anticipated a greater level of enthusiasm as the project progressed. USAID has echoed the GOH's questions about the necessity of the NPA, expressing concerns about potential administrative overlap and additional layers of bureaucracy. Post encouraged NOAA to coordinate closely with USAID and other agencies at the Washington level to ensure programmatic overlaps and duplication are avoided and any potential synergies with existing efforts are fully exploited. Post will also push for close interagency cooperation at the implementation level in the field, monitor the development of the project, and report back as events warrant.

Williard